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NEWS RELEASE

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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Nabil Wasfi Alkharouf, age 38, of Ashburn, Virginia, pled guilty today in United States District Court in Alexandria to one count of falsely reporting a future terrorist attack, as a hoax. Alkharouf faces a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000. United States District Judge Claude M. Hilton set sentencing for May 12, 2006.

Over a span of nine days in the summer of 2005, Alkharouf made several anonymous communications with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and local law enforcement in Northern Virginia and New York, providing them with the name, address and other specific identifying information of an individual planning to conduct a terrorist attack in the coming weeks.

Alkharouf made several telephone calls to the Department of Homeland Security, claiming to have been selected by elders in the local Muslim community to warn authorities about an Iraqi individual living in Arlington, Virginia. Alkharouf warned that the individual was harboring three other Iraqis illegally in the country, that they had made several recent trips to Syria and that they had smuggled in a cache of weapons from overseas. Alkharouf described the individual as being disturbed and upset about the war in Iraq. He also reported that the individual had recently made comments about the D.C. area being too secure for him to do anything and that he would instead conduct an attack in California in the coming weeks.

In letters and an e-mail sent to the FBI and local law enforcement in Northern Virginia and New York, Alkharouf repeated some of the same claims, while continually emphasizing the individual's background and Ph.D. training in geographical information systems, mapping and geo-sensing. Alkharouf also warned that New York was a possible target.

The Department of Homeland Security and FBI took the warnings seriously, immediately locating the individual and investigating further after corroborating certain suspicious facts that had been provided by Alkharouf. Federal agents determined that the individual was not a threat and they traced the anonymous phone calls and e-mail back to Alkharouf. When Alkharouf was questioned, he admitted that he had lied and had made up the allegations to get back at the individual for dating his ex-girlfriend.

"Making a false terrorist threat is a serious violation of law, draining our already overburdened public safety agencies and preventing them from pursuing real threats to our national security," said Mark Garrand, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the ICE Washington DC Office of Investigations. "Lies told to federal authorities will eventually be discovered, especially by federal agents trained to investigate and dig for the truth"

The case was investigated by agents of the Department of Homeland Security's Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement with the assistance of the FBI and the Joint Terrorism Task Force. Assistant United States Attorney Gordon D. Kromberg and Special Assistant United States Attorney Kevin R. Gingras are prosecuting the case for the United States.

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